

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MT

SUBJ: FINAL MALTESE ELECTION RESULTS

REF: VALLETTA 1076

1. ALTHOUGH STILL NOT OFFICIALLY CERTIFIED BY THE  
ELECTORAL COMMISSION, FINAL RETURNS FROM THE SEPTEMBER  
17-18 MALTESE ELECTION HAVE NOW BEEN PUBLISHED. THESE  
RETURNS CONFIRM THE INDICATED 34 TO 31 MARGIN IN  
PARLIAMENTARY SEATS FOR THE MALTA LABOR PARTY OVER  
THE NATIONALIST OPPOSITION. THIS RESULT WILL GIVE  
MLP LEADER DOM MINTOFF THE SAME THREE-SEAT MAJORITY

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DURING THE FIVE-YEAR TERM OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT THAT

HE ENJOYED IN THE OUTGOING ONE.

2. MINTOFF WAS REINSTALLED OFFICIALLY AS PRIME MINISTER ON SEPTEMBER 22 BY PRESIDENT MAMO AT A SWEARING-IN CEREMONY AT THE PALACE IN VALLETTA. THE COMPOSITION OF MINTOFF'S NEW CABINET MAY NOT BE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME, NOR IS IT CERTAIN HOW SOON HE WILL RECALL PARLIAMENT. THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES FOR A MAXIMUM OF TWO-MONTH'S DELAY BETWEEN THE ELECTION AND THE FIRST PARLIAMENTARY SITTING. FIVE YEARS AGO MINTOFF WAITED ALMOST THE FULL TWO MONTHS BEFORE PARLIAMENT OPENED.

3. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES CAST IN THE ELECTION WAS 206,843, WHICH REPRESENTED 94.97 PERCENT OF THE REGISTERED VOTERS. AFTER ELIMINATING 1,403 "INVALID" VOTES, THE MALTA LABOR PARTY RECEIVED 105,904 VOTES, OR 51.54 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL; WHILE THE NATIONALIST PARTY RECEIVED 99,501 VOTES, OR 48.43 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL. THIS REPRESENTED A 6,403 VOTE MARGIN FOR THE LABORITES, COMPARED WITH A 4,695 VOTE MAJORITY IN 1971.

4. DESPITE THE FACT THAT THERE WAS AN INCREASE OF ALMOST 38,000 VOTERS OVER 1971, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PARTIES IN PERCENTAGE TERMS WAS ALMOST UNCHANGED. THEREFORE, THE PARTICIPATION FOR THE FIRST TIME OF 18-TO-21 YEAR-OLD VOTERS DID NOT SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE THE OVERALL OUTCOME. MALTA REMAINS A COUNTRY ALMOST, BUT NOT QUITE, EVENLY DIVIDED BETWEEN THE LABORITES AND THE NATIONALISTS.

5. ONE INDICATION OF MINTOFF'S MAJOR PERSONAL TRIUMPH IN RETAINING HIS THREE-SEAT PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY CAN BE SEEN IN THE NUMBER OF VOTES WHICH HE RECEIVED COMPARED WITH THOSE GIVEN TO GIORGIO BORG OLIVIER, THE OPPOSITION NATIONALIST LEADER. IN THE FIRST ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF VALLETTA, WHERE THE TWO COMPETED DIRECTLY AGAINST EACH OTHER, MINTOFF RECEIVED 6,248 VOTES COMPARED WITH ONLY 4,645 FOR BORG OLIVIER. BORG OLIVIER RECEIVED ANOTHER 2,445 VOTES IN THE RABAT DISTRICT, WHILE MINTOFF OBTAINED THE HUGE TOTAL OF 8,082 VOTES IN HIS HOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DISTRICT OF COSPICUA. IN OTHER WORDS, MINTOFF RECEIVED 14,330 PERSONAL VOTES, OR MORE THAN TWICE BORG OLIVIER'S TOTAL OF 7,090. AND THIS DIFFERENCE IN THE PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR THE TWO LEADERS WAS MORE THAN THE FINAL OVERALL POPULAR VOTE MARGIN BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

6. ONE UNIQUE FEATURE OF THE COMPLICATED MALTESE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IS THE RIGHT OF CANDIDATES TO RUN IN

TWO DISTRICTS, IF THEY SO CHOOSE. MANY CANDIDATES DO SO AND, AS A RESULT, A NUMBER ARE ALWAYS ELECTED TWICE. AFTER THE CERTIFICATION OF THE OFFICIAL RESULTS, THESE CANDIDATES MUST THEN SELECT WHICH OF THE TWO DISTRICTS THEY WILL REPRESENT IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT. FOLLOWING THIS, THE BALLOTS FOR THE VACATED SEATS MUST BE RECOUNTED TO DETERMINE THE IDENTITY OF THEIR REPLACEMENTS. THIS PROCEDURE DOES NOT AFFECT WHICH POLITICAL PARTY WINS THE SEAT, BUT IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO THE ALSO-RAN CANDIDATES.

7. THIS YEAR, THERE WERE TEN CANDIDATES ELECTED IN TWO DISTRICTS EACH, SIX LABORITES AND FOUR NATIONALISTS. THE RECOUNTING OF BALLOTS TO DETERMINE THEIR EVENTUAL REPLACEMENTS WILL START LATER THIS WEEK. WHEN THE FINAL LIST OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES IS OFFICIALLY CERTIFIED, THE EMBASSY WILL FORWARD IT VIA AIRGRAM.

8. LABOR SUPPORTERS TOOK TO THE STREETS ON MONDAY TO CELEBRATE THEIR VICTORY, WITH THE INEVITABLE RESULT THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER WAVE OF DESTRUCTION AGAINST NATIONALIST PARTY CLUBS IN A NUMBER OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND, AS HAD BEEN THE CASE ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS DURING THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. THE NATIONALISTS GENERALLY KEPT OUT OF SIGHT, AND THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF PERSONAL INJURY. BY TUESDAY MORNING, THINGS WERE GENERALLY BACK TO NORMAL, BUT THE NATIONALISTS ARE CONTINUING TO MAINTAIN A RATHER LOW PROFILE.

9. COMMENT: AFTER FIVE LONG YEARS OF PERPETUAL POLITICKING, IT FINALLY IS ALL OVER BUT THE LABOR SHOUTING. MINTOFF HAS ANNOUNCED A MASS VICTORY RALLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT PALACE SQUARE IN VALLETTA ON FRIDAY EVENING, BUT HE HAS WARNED PUBLICLY THAT FURTHER VIOLENCE (ALMOST ALL OF WHICH HAS BEEN CAUSED BY HIS LABOR SUPPORTERS) WILL NOT BE TOLERATED ON THIS OCCASION. AFTER THE VICTORY RALLY, MOST OF THE ISLAND DOUBTLESS WOULD LIKE TO GET BACK TO BUSINESS AS USUAL AND A LESS HECTIC WAY OF LIFE. MINTOFF NOW HAS A SUFFICIENTLY STRONG POPULAR VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, AND A ROCK SOLID PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY (BY MALTESE STANDARDS) TO ENABLE HIM TO UNDERTAKE ALMOST ANY ACTIVITIES OR INITIATIVES THAT HE DESIRES IN HIS SECOND TERM AS PRIME MINISTER. WHILE THE RESULT OF THE ELECTION WAS NOT SURPRISING, WHAT MINTOFF MAY HAVE UP HIS SLEEVE FOR MALTA'S FUTURE MUST AWAIT HIS OWN PRONOUNCEMENTS DURING THE COMING MONTHS. SMITH

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